



(U) Letters to the Editor: Helping Your Leaders Make Decisions that Stick

FROM: SIGINT Communications
Unknown
Run Date: 03/24/2004

(U//FOUO) We received several letters about Charles Berlin's recent article [The Bald Truth: Helping Your Leaders Make Decisions That Stick](#) :

(U//FOUO) Absolutely on point. The DoD is maturing it's own governance and resource management processes. Management by process does not "fix" everything but it does improve the basic decision-making cycle. NSA, DoD, and the IC have governance and resource management processes. The processes are designed to limit some of the problems that you have identified.

-- [REDACTED]

(U//FOUO) These are excellent observations. Yet, option briefs take much more preparation than point briefings. When staff are spread thin and work without adequate prioritization, they may resort to point briefs to keep their heads above water.

-- [REDACTED]

(U//FOUO) Mr. Berlin's guidance on providing options and criteria for decision making absolutely hit the nail on the head, but I suggest this is two-way street. The person proposing a solution should provide options and criteria, but leaders and decision makers also need to reject proposed solutions that are NOT accompanied by options and criteria. Even "point-solution" solution outputs of acknowledged SIGINT-smart people should not be readily accepted and ingested without at least a nominal analysis of alternatives.

Just my systems engineer's \$.02. Have a great SID day!

-- [REDACTED]

(U//FOUO) This article was excellent. It described a problem that we (NSAers) often see and experience, and cited a well thought-out and 'doable' solution. YEAH!

-- [REDACTED]

(U//FOUO) Uncertainty also arises from instability. When we revisit old problems we thought we'd solved and keep re-solving them because the solution we tried "really didn't improve anything", it can result in continual tumult. Witness the performance evaluation, compensation reform, and too-frequent reorganization phenomena. But while some solutions will show good results in an instant, in other cases for deep, meaningful, well-considered approaches to improvement to evolve, we need to give it TIME to evolve. We need to perhaps silence the voices constantly in our

SERIES: **The Bald Truth**

1. [The Bald Truth: Technical Leadership](#)
2. [The Bald Truth: The Sweet Conspiracy](#)
3. [The Bald Truth: P3 & Promotion Feedback](#)
4. [The Bald Truth: Helping Your Leaders Make Decisions that Stick](#)
5. Letters to the Editor: Helping Your Leaders Make Decisions that Stick
6. [Letter to the Editor: Helping Your Leaders Make Decisions that Stick](#)

ears harping with "That didn't work; try something else!" And we need to look at those areas in SID and NSA where providing a solution actually created a worse environment than the problem had done. (But first we need to admit that this has happened.)

(U//FOUO) Wise deliberation and a more or less natural evolution, rather than continual uproarious change just to please critics or the metrics-masters who want the solutions to cure the patient "right now" -- I feel we need the pendulum to swing, and we need to get all our well-thought-out processes out of the way of its swinging.

(U//FOUO) The NSA workforce knows how to do its job when given it. Stability, both organizational and procedural, will help us do this, even when the job involves forward-thinking and transformation. Evolution, not uproar. The workforce will let you know when it's time to shake the tree a bit.

-- [REDACTED]

(U//FOUO) Charles, you hit the nail on the head. Unfortunately, NSA does not have a program which teaches folks how to do good staff work. Most NSAers also do not think they are doing "staff work" when they are putting together proposals or developing options for programs, etc. Staff work is only done by those folks who work on staffs, right? I hope that your article reaches down and grabs most folks, and hopefully some lights will go on. When I say "reaches down and grabs most folks" I also mean the managers who in many instances are worried more about personal risk avoidance rather than making the best decision.

-- [REDACTED]

"(U//FOUO) SIDtoday articles may not be republished or reposted outside NSANet without the consent of S0121 ([DL sid comms](#))."
